

Despair and Hope--Chapter Two

by Kari

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Summary: After arriving in NY, Jack comes to Rose in a dream, bringing with him news that will change her life.

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By Kari Raines @ JadedAmida@aol.com

Visit my Despair and Hope homepage:

<http://members.xoom.com/JadeSabre/despair.html>

Summary: After wandering around NY, Rose goes to Molly Brown for help. Once she's safe and warm, Jack comes to her in a dream, bringing with him some shocking news that will change her life. Please read the Prologue and Ch. 1 first. And please review! I love to know what people think. Disclaimer is located in the Prologue.

The rain battered down on the young woman's already frozen body relentlessly, soaking through her coat and dress, and sending wracks of shivers unmercifully through her entire body. Rose gasped in despair, the tears shedding forth just as relentlessly as the rain, becoming lost as they were washed away by the downpour.

Still, Rose pressed forth through the unforgiving coldness and rain of the harsh New York City night. She attempted to fight back the sobs that were threatening to rip forward from her chest. She was not strong--she had been through too much, both physically and emotional. She was shocked, heartbroken, exhausted, cold, wet, hungry, and there was nothing she could do about it. So this was what freedom was like, she thought bitterly in her hour of miserable desperation. *Come Josephine in my flying machine, going up she goes, up she goes.* The lyrics of the song Jack had sung to her on the bow of Titanic raced through her head as it often had in the last few days when she needed

comfort. It took her back to the short time she had spent with him on that ship. On that particular occasion, he had taught her how to fly. She shut her eyes tight in an attempt to relive the memory in its entirety. *I'm flying . . . Jack!* And then had come the moment when she truly had soared--when she'd been freed with the touch of his gentle yet passionate kiss, which offered promises of life and freedom in its generous sincerity.

"Help me, Jack, please, please," she all but begged between ragged sobs as she fought her way down yet another abandoned alleyway. She had been to New York before, but not like this. Before, she had traveled in a world of isolated protection. She was not sure how to get to the hotel she was looking for.

Just when she was sure that Jack was not going to answer her this time, she stumbled around a corner, and there it was. *Thank you, Jack.*

* * *

Margaret "Molly" Brown sighed as she sat down heavily on the side of the bed in her luxurious hotel suite. It had been a long day. Heck, it had been a long week. She had spent virtually the last few days comforting the stricken women such as Madeleine Astor and Ruth DeWitt Bukater, completely suppressing her own pain--though she certainly had not lost as much as most of the other passengers.

Unexpectedly, Molly was disturbed by an almost imperceptible tapping from the door of her suite. Sighing again, she called out, "Come on in." Before the tragedy, none of the other women of first class wanted anything to do with her--the so-called "new money." Now they acted as though she were their best friend.

Almost unnaturally slow, the door creaked open. Molly's mouth dropped open at the sight of the girl standing in the doorway. It was presumed dead, seventeen-year-old Rose DeWitt Bukater: soaked to the bone, unusually thin, ghostly pale, and trembling violently.

Molly hesitated momentarily as the surprise wore off, before rushing to the shocked and frightened girl. Rose wasted no time in collapsing in her arms. "Jack," she whispered as Molly practically carried the drained girl to the bed.

"It'll all be fine, Rose darlin'. You'll see," Molly promised soothingly as she wiped a clumped strand of red hair out of Rose's eyes. "Your mother is so worried. I should go get her."

Rose's eyes went wide with sudden alertness. "No," she gasped, voice pleading with desperation as she clutched Molly's arm. Molly studied the young woman, recognizing the silent determination written in her wide eyes.

Finally, she nodded in acceptance. "If that's what you really want, darlin'."

Rose nodded. It was.

Molly was full of questions for Rose--the first one being what had become of Jack. But as she went to retrieve blankets for the girl, she knew that the questions would have to wait. The girl was in shock

and the recent events of her life were open wounds. "Here you go, darlin'," Molly smiled with forced cheerfulness, helping Rose to remove her dripping coat and wrapping the blankets tightly around the girl's freezing body. "Now you stay here and get yourself warmed up. I'm going to run you a nice, hot bath."

Rose did not respond as Molly headed toward the bath. Her eyes had become dull as she once again sank into the solace of her memories with Jack. But she was not comforted. Instead, she was sickened by the pain caused by the realization of her loss.

She was no longer able to hold in that pain as it spilt forth in a rush of unrestrained tears. *When the ship docks, I'm getting off with you. When the ship docks, I'm getting off with you. When the ship docks, I'm--*

Stop it, please oh please make it stop, Jack. The room spun around her in a blur of darkness as she lost herself completely in her pain. "Why?!" Rose screamed in a desperate sob that ripped forward from her aching heart. "Oh, God!" she gasped, clutching her damp and matted hair in her white-knuckled hands as she pulled her knees up to her chest. "Why, Jack?" she sobbed, the tears now coming forth just as relentless as the rain of the cold New York night. The heavens seemed to be mourning with her. "Why did you leave me? Don't you know that I need you? How could you have made me make such a promise when I don't even want to live another day, much less an entire lifetime?"

Molly suddenly reappeared in the room. Her arms engulfed Rose in a desperate effort calm and soothe the grief-stricken girl. "Shhh, honey, everything will be just fine. I'm here." Despite her words of encouragement, Molly felt the sharp sting of tears threatening to overwhelm her as well. From Rose's reactions, she now knew that the goodhearted and talented young man named Jack Dawson had not survived the sinking. Her heart went out to the girl trembling in her arms. She knew the loss must have been terrible for Rose. After all, such a lack of control was uncharacteristic of the fiery but calm Rose that she knew.

Rose did not hear Molly's words of encouragement, however. She only heard Jack. He was the one holding her, comforting her trembling body and wounded spirit. She opened her eyes and was met by his intense blue gaze. She gasped, reaching up to touch his face. He felt so real. She could feel the rough bit of stubble that felt so awkward on his soft skin. His skin was so warm. "My beautiful Rose," Jack whispered tenderly, returning her touch.

"Jack . . . am I dreaming?" Her eyes were wide with disbelief and hope.

"No," he whispered, tracing the curve of her jaw bone with the tip of his finger. "I'm really here. For the moment."

"Where's Molly?" she asked, her voice sounding so innocent.

"She's safe. She'll be back soon," Jack assured her, his finger now tracing over the full curve of her lower lip.

Jack looked the same as he had last time she saw him--the night he'd died, not longer than a week ago. The severed handcuffs were still attached to his wrists.

Rose opened her mouth to speak, but Jack silenced her by placing his finger vertically across her lips. "Rose, you have to be strong. You can't forget about your promise. You have to go on, Rose."

A hard lump formed in her throat. "Jack," she whispered, voice breaking. "Jack, I can't. I can't live without you. I have nothing without you. It wasn't supposed to happen this way. We were supposed to get off the ship together, both of us, and go to the pier in Santa Monica and drink cheap beer and ride the rollercoaster till we threw up. You were supposed to teach me to ride a horse like a man so we could ride on the beach together and we were supposed to have a family together and share our lives together . . ." She broke off suddenly, looking at him sternly. "If I can't have you, I don't want anything."

"Rose," he started again, taking her hands, "you will not feel that way the rest of your life. I'm not saying," he continued when she opened her mouth to protest, "that you'll ever stop loving me. Our love is powerful, Rose. It's what's enabling me to come to you now. We're bound together, Rose, and I promise you that one day we will be together forever. When the time comes, I want you to remember what I wrote on that note at dinner--'Make it count. Meet me at the clock.'"

"But until then," he whispered, touching her soft cheek gently as she listened to him intently, "I want you to live, like you promised me you would do. Make it count. Because, Rose," he said, cupping her face for emphasis, "you have more reason to live right now than you have ever had." Her brow furrowed in puzzlement at his last statement. "A part of me will always be with you," he continued, "and I'm not just talking about my last name." He paused, searching her face and her heart before continuing. His brilliant blue eyes burned into hers with the most intense look she'd ever seen on his face. "Rose, nine months from now when you give birth to my baby, she's going to need you. You will love her with all the love I know you're capable of giving, but you will have to be strong for her."

Her eyes widened with shock and joy and hope all at once. *Jack's baby. Jack's daughter. Our daughter.* For the billionth time since Jack's death, she felt her eyes brimming with tears--tears of joy that she would have a true flesh-and-blood part of Jack with her, and tears of sadness that Jack would not be able to be a direct part of the child's life. *Jack's self-sacrifice was not his last gift to me,* Rose realized. *The life I carry inside of myself is Jack's ultimate gift to me.*

"I will be able to watch her grow," he assured her. "Just promise me that you'll give her the life that she deserves; that you will love her with the kind of love you were never shown in your life."

"I promise," she answered solemnly, echoing the former promise she had made to him only a week ago. Had it really only been a week? To Rose, the events that took place onboard Titanic seemed like a lifetime ago. "I also promise that she will know what a wonderful person her father was," she said, slipping her hand behind Jack's neck and kissing him warmly.

Jack returned the kiss with as much passion as he had in the Renault, when they'd made love--when they'd created the child she now carried

inside her. He held her tight, not wanting the precious moment to end, burying his face in her red curls that he loved so much. After disengaging, he kissed her gently on her forehead and turned to look into her eyes again. "I love you so much, Rose."

This time, the tears did spill down her face, so moved was she by his sincere affection. "I love you, too, Jack. I love you so much."

He smiled lovingly at his beautiful Rose, taking her hands and kissing the backs of them. She returned the smile at his gesture, remembering the time he had done that on the grand staircase on the Titanic. I saw that in a nickelodeon once and I always wanted to try it. "I have to go now, Rose," he finally told her softly.

She gazed at him hard, a depression threatening to overcome her at the thought of him leaving. "Can't you stay just a little longer?" she pleaded.

"I'll always be with you, Rose. Remember--be strong for our daughter and for yourself."

"And for you," she whispered with finality.

He smiled again. "And for me."

When he kissed her again, she knew that it was not goodbye. Jack would always be with her--watching over her and the child they had created together.

Continued in Chapter Three.

End
file.